A

Sober Dialogue

Betwixt *William Howard*, late Viſcount *Stafford*, and the Lords in the Tower.

St. MY Lords, I am come to viſit again, you may wonder I am come to you without my head, be not affrighted, for the reaſon is plain, I ſpoke without my own head when I was alive, and now I am reſolved to ſpeak without my own head after I am dead.

Ar. And how go affairs in thoſe parts where you have been?

St. By my *No Head*, not very well.

Ar. How ſo?

St. Why, when I came into Hell, I found there was a great Reception prepared for me; and all the Popes and Cardinals that ever were in the World, were drawn up in Files for me to paſs through.

Pet. So, and what followed?

St. Why, ſo I went forward, and paſs't through, and expected a great Treatment by the preparations that I perceived at my apartment. So that I was conſidering whether my head were right ſet on or no; knowing that if that part of my Wind-pipe above, did not anſwer to that below, the pleaſure of taſting and ſwallowing would be very much inconvenienced. But to put me beſide that curioſity, I had no ſooner received the Viſits of about 4 or 5 of the moſt eminent Popes and Cardinals in thoſe Quarters, but I was ſent for to appear before the grand *Belzebub* himſelf. Being come into his preſence, the duskie Emperour demanded of me what had brought me thither? I anſwered him, that I was brought thither by the Commiſſion of God, as if I had been in a Plot.

In a Plot, quoth the Devil! againſt whom? againſt my Prince ſaid I: With that the Devil preſently asked me for ſecurity for my good Behaviour. For ſaid he, Plotters are certainly the very worſt of men; wee'l ſay that for our ſelves, and a Fig for our ſelves, we that are Devils never Plot one againſt another. Hell has a very bad Opinion of Plotters; and therefore ſaid he again, find me good ſecurity for your good behaviour.

Bel. And what did you then do my Lord?

St. Why, Truly my Lord, I was got pretty ſober by that time; and thought to have ſent for the five Jeſuites, but then thought I again, they are in Heaven, ſo that I was at a very great ſtand: And to tell ye the Truth my Lords, had I known I ſhould not have been in Heaven too, I ſhould hardly have done what I did.

Po. Why my Lord, I believe you did come from Heaven, for you ſmell nothing of Brimſtone.

St. Look ye now, you'l perſwade me out of my ſences now, as ye did when I was alive. No no, my Lords, I am not in Heaven, I am in Hell, when I am at my new home. And I muſt tell ye my Lords, I am not a little angry.

With that they all turned colour, expecting ſome Spiritual Attaque from the Apparition: it being the comm n received Opinion, that a man without Fleſh and Bones, is ſtronger than a man with Fleſh and Bones, as we find by the ſtrength of the Wind, the force of which no Corporeal ſubſtance is able to withſtand. But the ſhadow proteſting upon his Honour that he would not be guilty of any violence towards them, they reſumed their wonted courage, and ſo the Spirit went on.

St. I ſay my Lords, I am not a little angry that you ſhould put me to read a made Speech half Seas over, more for your own ends than my advantage.

Po. Was it not as much for your advantage as ours?

St. No, For had it not been for you, I could have plaid my Game better, and I might have ſmoaked many a Pipe, and drank off many a glaſs more in yours, or elſe in as good or better Company.

Po. Oh Sir, you do not conſider all this while, that the way of dying as you did, ſpared you the Charges of an expenſive Funeral; and where could your body have been ſafer laid than cloſe by the Communion Table, in the Tower Chappel?

St. I come not here to complain of the diſpoſal of my body, I am too late ſenſible, that 'tis too late to think of it: but I am come to complain of the breach of your aſſurances in reference to this part that here appears before you.

Ar. Sir, 'tis impoſſible but you muſt be ſecure in all that was promiſed you.

St. That's not ſo; for I was promiſed the immediate poſſeſſion of Heaven; and I am quite in a contrary place.

Pet. How does your Lordſhip know that? it ſeems you are no cloſe Priſoner yet.

St. That's nothing to the purpoſe, I know it well enough; I did but ask for the Virgin *Mary*, and I had like to have had my Brains beaten out.

Ar. Did you ask for the five Holy Jeſuits?

St.

St. Yes; and they told me they were there; but I could not speak with them.

Ar. Then Ile warrant your Lordship you mistake the place.

St. I tell ye I do not: 'Tis as dark as Pitch, and we only see as Cats do, by a new Operation of the Sight.

Po. How came ye hither then?

St. Why, I claimed my Priviledge as I was a Papist, telling the Grand Signior of the Shades, that if Apparitions ceased, all the Old Women of our Religion would be converted from one of the chief Articles of our Church. I thought I had done well because you made me read, That I was not asham'd of my Religion. But I find that the Devil has no great kindness for those of our Religion; and the reason is, because that when ever he has a mind to take a frolick in the World, and to possess either man or woman, we do so persecute him with our exorcisms, so besslabber him with our Holy water, that he can never be quiet at his Recreations; to tell you the plain Truth, I had as live be hanged as to return thither again, for I have a deadly fear upon me, of being called to another Bar, and of receiving another Sentence far worse than what I have received already. Where is that Lord and Priest that cajol'd me with so many fine Stories? Oh here he comes. My Lord, what did you tell me if I should confess?

Caf. That you should be eternally Damn'd.

St. What if I should not confess?

Caf. That you should be eternally happy.

St. My Lord, I did not confess. You are a Priest and a Person of Honour, I expect you should make your words good.

Ar. My Lord, we have done all that lay in our power, we have sent your Lordships Picture to *Rome*, we have Petitioned for a Saintship for ye the next that falls, and therefore pray, my Lord, have Patience a little while.

St. All this will signifie nothing, unless this good man, by his Prayers will speedily get me a *Ha. Cor.* to remove me into another place. I have pawned all my Salvation to purchase this short Liberty; How the Devil will value it I know not, but if it should once chance to be attached and condemned in his Court, what a Case shall I be in? Pray good my Lord Priest consider my Condition.

Caf. Why Sir, did not you receive Absolution for all the Sins of your Youth, and for all the Sins of your Old Age, and for all the false Protestations which you were ordered to own upon the Scaffold?

St. Yes.

Caf. What need have you then to fear? assure your self, the Popes power is above the Devils, Nay, I may say his power is so great in Heaven it self, that if we cannot get you out of the Devils clutches by fair means, wee'l do it by foul.

St. Look ye Father, you shall see that Ile be reasonable, where is that place called Fools Paradise? help me but thither, any where but where I am going to return: If there be any such place, I say help me thither, for I have been fool'd out of my life egregiously.

Caf. That could not be, you were only desired to withdraw for the general good of the Cause.

St. Why then, if it be so good a Cause, pray will you make all the haste you can, and withdraw after me.

Caf. I would be one of the first, I assure your Lordship, but that I stay for the good of your Soul, and I assure you in a short time to make Hell too hot to hold ye.

St. Truly, Holy Father, I find that I have been so infinitely deluded hitherto that I know not what to say, I find that if I had been but Master of my own Reason, I might have been Master still of my own Head, and therefore I must put ye a little closer to it; Is there no way in the World to avoid returning from whence I came? Have you never an old piece of *Josephs* rusty Ax? never a little bit of the very Cross? never a rag of the Virgins under Petticoat? These are things they say that will put the Devil into an Agony, and make him condescend to any thing you would have him do. Or else what think ye of a little cruise of Holy water to carry with me to besprinkle the Devil should he come toward me with his toasting Iron.

Caf. Renowned Ghost, be contented, thou hast highly merited of all the Saints that ever were and ever will be, and therefore *the Gates of Hell shall not prevail against thee.*

St. Why this is something indeed, for here is a parcel of cold Comfort, but I fear me not enough to mitigate one wamble of the great Lake, give me some more on't. Tell me how ye drew me in? how ye deluded my Devotion? how ye cheated my Conscience? how ye bridl'd my Confession? how ye pamper'd my Ignorance? how ye charmed my reason and my senses? how ye fooled me with promises? and sent me to the Scaffold to dye like an Ooze, all this cold comfort put together, may serve me a while to lay upon my Tongue in the Rich mans Condition.

As he was going on, the Cocks began to Crow, which being the Summons for Nocturnal Apparitions to depart, the Criminal Shade prepared to take his leave, upon which one of the Company observing the rule of drinking to the going person, began the Popes Health, being now entred into another Rule and method of living, only thanked him for his kindness, and so immediately vanished.

London, Printed for S. N. 1681.